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“Talking Frankly” about David Irving

A Critical Analysis of David Irving's Statement on the Holocaust

By Hadding Scott

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previous Page 8 of 12 next

(5)

Some years ago when Irving started presenting the Hoefle Telegram as evidence for mass-murder, he encountered this obvious criticism, directed to him repeatedly by an irate Paul Grubach:

> *“Does the Hoefle document, the piece of ‘evidence’ that changed your mind on the Holocaust, does it specifically mention ‘homicidal gas chambers’ or the ‘mass murder of Jews’ in various concentration camps in any spot?*

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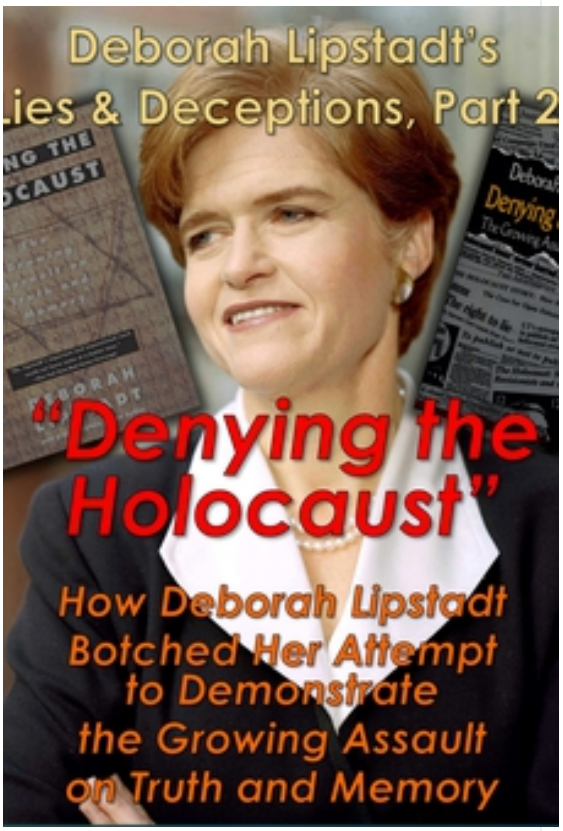
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> *"A simple 'yes' or 'no' will suffice."* (*A Radical's Diary*, 12 October 2007)

In fact there are three criticisms that can be made of David Irving's use of the Hoefle Telegram as evidence for mass-murder in the Operation Reinhardt camps. The most obvious point is that the telegram says nothing about killing anyone. Irving offers a criticism of his own, which is that the document carries indications of being fake. I also have a criticism of how David Irving somewhat misrepresents the Hoefle Telegram in this "Talking Frankly" video. I shall explain the last point first.

Early in his discussion of the Reinhardt camps, Mr. Irving mentions Majdanek just once, when he names the camps:

> *"There was Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. And on top of that came the camp called Majdanek. You can go and visit all these camps in Poland now, but the reason they're not on the tourist-route is because there's nothing to see. There's no buildings you can see, no execution-walls, no buildings described as crematoria or gas-chambers. There are just bald patches in the middle of a forest."* (1:41:04 – 1:41:26)

Although he mentioned Majdanek, none of what David Irving just said is true of Majdanek. The camp is mostly intact, with several alleged gas-chambers and a (rebuilt) crematorium shown to tourists.

In fact, Majdanek was one of the camps

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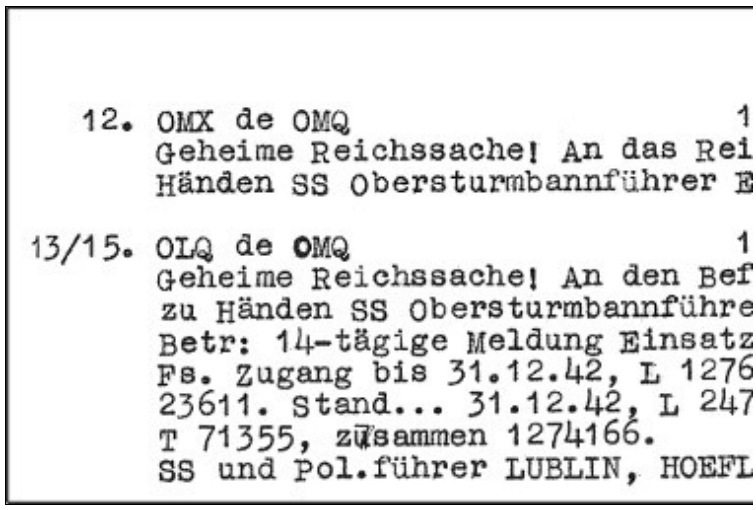
examined by Fred Leuchter. Majdanek is in the original *Leuchter Report*. Earlier in this talk, Mr. Irving gave a warm endorsement to Fred Leuchter and his findings about Auschwitz, but did not mention Leuchter's examination of Majdanek and his conclusion that nobody was gassed there.

When Majdanek was captured by the Red Army in 1944, it was "estimated by Soviet and Polish authorities" that "as many as 1,500,000 persons" had died in the camp (W.H. Lawrence, *New York Times News-Service*, 30 August 1944). The figure of "about 1½ million persons" also appeared in the 1945 indictment of "major war-criminals" (IMT transcript, 20 November 1945). Today, by contrast, a publication of the Israeli Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, states that only "150,000 people" were ever even incarcerated at Majdanek, where "up to 45,000 prisoners could be housed … at a time." In 2007 Tomasz Kranz estimated that 60,000 Jews and 18,000 others died in the camp (Yad Vashem publication *Majdanek*). At Majdanek, the myth of the Holocaust has been in a precipitous retreat.



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Geheime Reichssache! An das Rei
Händen SS Obersturmbannführer E

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Fs. Zugang bis 31.12.42, L 1276
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The Hoefle Tel

Mr. Irving omits to tell his audience that Majdanek is in the Hoefle Telegram. He says “T, S, and B,” but it is really T, S, B, and L. “L” would be Lublin, which is another way to designate the camp at Majdanek, since Majdanek is within the city of Lublin.

Why that omission? Because there is less free play for paranoid imaginings about a camp that is still standing and can be examined, compared to “bald patches in the middle of a forest”:

> *"To me, that is far more evocative, far more lonely and sinister, when you go into the middle of this forest and suddenly there is a one or two kilometer square bald patch, where nothing seems to have happened." (1:41:28-40)*

Majdanek, furthermore, has been thoroughly debunked as a supposed killing-center. David Irving chooses not to mention that Majdanek is in the Hoefle document because he does not

want an intrusion of humdrum reality into his imaginative story.

In February 2002, in a polemic directed at Pierre Vidal-Naquet, a Jewish defender of the Holocaust-faith who was reckless enough, even before David Irving, to refer to intercepted and decrypted telegrams from the Second World War as new evidence for the Holocaust, Professor Robert Faurisson wrote:

> *“In the first place, these telegrams were intercepted and deciphered by British specialists about sixty years ago. At the time, the information that they contained was required to be immediately evaluated and taken into consideration by all interested parties – army, economy, propaganda – and shared with the Americans. All of that was explained in 1981 in F.H. Hinsley’s work* British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its influence on Strategy and Operations, *Volume 2 (Cambridge U. Press, 1979). Incidentally, one finds on page 673 of this book the following sentence: “There were no references in the decrypts to gassing.” (R. Faurisson, “Pierre Vidal-Naquet à Lyon”, 23 February 2002)*

David Irving has long been aware of that sentence from Hinsley’s book; he quotes it to Robert Jan van Pelt in a letter dated 29 May 1997. The entire page from Hinsley’s book is reproduced on Irving’s blog.

In addition to Hinsley's note about the absence

of references to gassing in decrypted radiotelegrams, David Irving in 1988 considered it highly significant that no other known German communications contained any such reference either:

> *"We know exactly what people knew at that time, because the Gestapo kept what are called morale reports, Stimmungsberichte, and these are complete and intact in the archives in Koblenz, and we know exactly what happened because people wrote letters and diaries. And they wrote letters to each other which were intercepted by the British secret service. Millions of letters were intercepted by the British.... We got hold of thousands of sackfuls of private letters written by people, and these letters were then sorted and read and analyzed, and reports were written on the content of these letters, and nowhere – and I've read these reports – nowhere is there the slightest reference to any Germans during the Second World War knowing about details of gas-chambers and gas-camps."*

Thus the Hoefle document, if it really were an intercepted communication referring to mass-murder by gassing, would be entirely unique. But the Hoefle document does not say anything about killing anyone, with gas or otherwise.

Faurisson explains that the Hoefle document only seems to be evidence for the Holocaust if one imaginatively "decodes" it instead of simply

reading it:

> *"In 2001 two authors, Peter Witte of Germany and Stephen Tyas of Britain ... claimed like so many others that they had just unearthed a 'new document,' although it was an item long known. Their study appeared in the periodical* Holocaust and Genocide Studies *(vol. 15, no. 3* [winter 2001], *pp. 468-486) under the title: 'A New Document on the Deportation and Murder of Jews during 'Einsatz Reinhardt' 1942.'* [...] *Since the appearance of their study, the authors have been forced to admit that in reality the document in question is not as new as their title had promised. The British were familiar with it and had deciphered it during the war. But, behold, our two authors think that the deciphering had been only "partial." For them, the British had seen clearly that there were 'deportations' but they had failed to understand what these deportations meant -- the death of all the deportees. In reality the British had noted, just as we can today, that the German text speaks only of* 'Umsiedlung,' *of* 'umgesiedelt' *and of* 'durchgeschleust.' *That is to say, about 'resettlement,' about persons 'resettled,' and about persons 'passed through' the transit camps. The British made nothing more of it, and rightly so."*

Once again David Irving, along with Witte and Tyas, engages in circular reasoning. Having interpreted Hoefle's telegram in the light of belief in the Holocaust – which the British experts during the war did not have – they then turn around and use their interpretation as evidence for the belief that generated it.

Each of the four camps mentioned in the Hoefle document, B, T, S, and L, has numbers listed under the categories *Zugang* and *Stand*.

On Irving's site, a letter from Michael Mills says that the word *Zugang* is problematic because in the jargon of German concentration-camps *Zugang*, Mills tells us, normally refers to people arriving at a camp to stay, an increase in the camp's population, not people sent to a camp just to be killed. For example, hardcore Communists segregated from other POWs and sent to Auschwitz for execution were not counted as *Zugang*. Irving in this talk totally ignores that problem. (M. Mills, "Some Problems with Interpreting that Intercept about Arrivals at B, S,T, L," 27 January 2002)

Stand appears in the previously discussed letter from Himmler to Dr. Grawitz, where it refers to a tally of (living) prisoners. Himmler writes to Dr. Grawitz that he finds the low cancer-mortality in the camps surprising, because the *Stand*, he says, indicates that there are many (living) prisoners in the camps of such an age as to be prone to cancer. If we are to assume that the SS used words with consistent meaning to avoid confusion, then *Stand* in the Hoefle document would most likely refer to a count of living prisoners.

Fundamentally, the Hoefle document only seems to have a sinister significance if one brings sinister assumptions to it. That is to say: if one already believes that the name Eichmann and the security-classification *geheime Reichssache* imply something nefarious, and that deporting Jews really means killing Jews. Decades of Holocaust-propaganda are the reason why Tyas and Witte could perceive the Hoefle Telegram as incriminating while the experts in Bletchley Park who originally handled the information did not. But why does David Irving see anything sinister in it? He is supposed to be the representative of Real History, the Englishman who has overcome the influence of propaganda.

David Irving’s last point about the Hoefle Telegram is that he somewhat doubts the document’s authenticity. The reasons that Irving gives in 2009 for doubting the document's authenticity seem, at least to a non-expert, very convincing:

> *“First of all let me say that I’m 80% sure the document is genuine – the Hoefle document – but there’s a 20% nagging, residual doubt. The document contains anomalies. First of all, it and the corresponding document that goes with it are addressed to Adolf Eichmann. Now, Adolf Eichmann is **the big name**. The one thing I’ve spotted about fake documents … is that they tend to be documents written about big names or by big names or to big names, because that’s the kind of document that document-*

collectors pay big money for. So it's a big-name document.

"The next thing is, the wording contained within the document does not conform with German civil-service standards, which were very strictly adhered to. It just says, 'referring to your message, the answer is as follows.' German civil service would require that document to say, 'referring to your message, register-number so and so, 12345, dated January the 10th 1943, the answer is as follows.' But there is neither a register-number or a date on the document.

"Also, the document has got the highest possible security-classification, geheime Reichssache, *and it's only one of three documents in all the hundreds of thousands of decodes that I've read that has that top-secret classification.*

"So, we've got those minor problems dealing it, and another very, uh, slightly lesser problem is that the totals don't add up. There's a digit wrong. So you've got a slightly awkward problem. Then you're left with the nagging suspicion, that is it a coincidence that the seven-digit figure it gives as the grand total is identical to the grand total given in a document called the Korherr document?" (1:47:46 – 1:49:31)

Elsewhere (*A Radical's Diary*, 4 October 2007) Irving also points out that the item was "bound into the archive file out of page-sequence" and that it has *Reinhardt* misspelled.

The strongest point in Irving's litany of reasons for rejecting the Hoefle document is his observation that the item in several ways "does not conform with German civil-service standards, which were very strictly adhered to." That alone should suffice to brand the item as a crude forgery. So it seems to this non-expert, at least.

Irving's doubts led him in June 2011 to propose that the document be subjected to forensic tests. He had "an acid exchange" with Stephen Tyas about this. Irving observed:

> *"He seems very keen that there should not be forensic tests on the Höfle document, or am I imagining that?"* (D. Irving, *A Radical's Diary*, 11 June 2011)

The next month Irving examines an ostensibly contemporary document referring to the Höfle document, and writes:

> *"It does seem to clinch the matter of whether the Höfle document is authentic or not, always assuming that this second reference document is not also a fake; but I think that unlikely. My brief examination of the latter document -- its paper, other pages, typewriter-face, and pencil jottings on it -- strongly suggests that it is contemporary with the other*

> *documents in that file.*” (D. Irving, *A Radical’s Diary*, 20 July 2011)

If, however, the Hoefle Telegram is merely an altered document rather than an entirely fake document, that would explain why other documents seem to refer to it.

Someone will ask why anyone would bother to produce a fake document that still does not prove anything. There are possible motives. Suppose that the real telegram from Hermann Hoefle was not addressed to Adolf Eichmann but to the statistician Richard Korherr, who was never accused of any crime. The assumptions about what the message means would be entirely different. Eichmann's name as recipient of the message stimulates the Holocaustian imagination and activates circular reasoning, so that the document is seen as evidence for what is really only *assumed* to have happened.

Perhaps the *Stand* for Treblinka was altered. The numbers in the Hoefle Telegram can be made to tally if one assumes that the *Stand* for Treblinka is supposed to have a 5 on the end that was dropped, but Michael Mills points out that this adjustment makes the proposition that Jews were being mistreated at Treblinka seem farfetched, given the small garrison at that camp. This may be what Irving means by a “very, uh, slightly lesser problem,” since Irving wants to say that Jews were being robbed and killed in all the Operation Reinhardt camps.

On the other hand, maybe the dropped 5 and other anomalies are due to imperfect radio-

reception. But, even assuming that the Hoefle Telegram is entirely genuine, it still does not prove what it is supposed to prove.

previous Page 8 of 12 next

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